



Remote Accessible Vote- by-Mail:

**A NEW WAY FOR CALIFORNIA VOTERS TO
VOTE PRIVATELY AND INDEPENDENTLY**

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Traditional Voting Options

- ▶ **All voters can request a vote-by-mail ballot without a reason why they cannot vote in person.**
 - Vote-by-Mail ballots are generally only available in paper
- ▶ **Generally, all voters may go to their polling place. Each polling place has an accessible voting system.**

How accessible is traditional Vote-by-Mail?

- ▶ Many voters with disabilities find it easier to vote-by-mail for the convenience of the process.
- ▶ For people with certain disabilities, (e.g. people who are blind or have a vision loss, people with mobility, dexterity or intellectual and developmental disabilities) voting by mail requires them to waive their right to a private and independent ballot because the paper ballots require voters to be able to read the ballot independently and be able to use a pen to mark the ballot.

Example

- ▶ **Several years ago, due to unusual circumstances, it was necessary for me to Vote-by-Mail**
- ▶ **Because of dexterity issues, I needed assistance to mark my ballot...**

Example (continued)

- ▶ ...unfortunately, I chose my mother to assist me.
- ▶ Needless to say, we differed on a number of candidates and issues.



SO MUCH FOR MY
PRIVATE AND
INDEPENDENT
BALLOT!

More Accessible Voting Options Needed

- ▶ **Some voters with disabilities are unable to vote by mail privately and independently. Nor can they get to their respective polling location.**
- ▶ **Washington, Colorado, Oregon, and Maryland have ballot marking devices for voters with disabilities to read and mark their vote-by-mail (or absentee) ballots privately and independently using their own devices.**

Movement Towards All-Mail Elections

- ▶ **San Mateo County held an all-mail special election in 2015 as a pilot.**
- ▶ **Several states now have all-mail elections, such as Washington and Oregon.**
- ▶ **Colorado uses the vote center model.**
- ▶ **Five counties in California will begin using the vote center model in June 2018 (under California's Voter's Choice Act passed in 2016) similar to Colorado: San Mateo, Napa, Madera, Sacramento, and Nevada.**

Voting Under The Voters Choice Act

- ▶ **Only applies to the 5 counties (San Mateo, Napa, Madera, Sacramento, and Nevada) in June 2018. All counties will have the option to switch in 2020.**
- ▶ **Every voter will be mailed a ballot**
- ▶ **Instead of neighborhood polling places there will be a limited number of Vote Centers located throughout the county as well as some Drop-Off Boxes.**
 - At Vote Centers:
 - Voters can drop off a completed vote-by-mail ballot
 - Vote using an accessible voting system
 - Register and vote on the same day
 - Voters will be able to use any vote center in the county
- ▶ **Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail**

Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail

- ▶ DRC and other disability advocates opposed SB 450, the bill that became the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), until they added protections for voters with disabilities including Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail
- ▶ Because of the VCA, AB 2252 was passed requiring the Secretary of State to certify Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail.
- ▶ A voter with a disability would download their ballot and use their own assistive technology to read and mark the ballot.
- ▶ Because of security concerns, they will need to print the ballot and mail it back.

Current RAVBM Systems:

- ▶ **Democracy Live (certified)**
- ▶ **Five Cedars (certified)**
- ▶ **Dominion (currently under testing for certification)**

How does RAVBM work?

1. When the voter receives their VBM ballot, they should keep the return envelope to return the ballot selections.
2. A voter would request a RAVBM from their County elections office by postage paid application, phone or email.
3. Once request is received, an email with a link to the RAVBM will be sent to the voter. Voter would click on link and enter their voter information in a secured portal. At this time, the voter would affirm they are a voter with a disability (type of disability is not asked).
4. Voter downloads their specific ballot type and any additional information and instructions on how to mark and return the ballot.

How does RAVBM work? (Continued)

5. **Voter marks their ballot using own assistive technology (jelly switches, screen readers, mouse keys, sip and puff, etc)**
 - ▶ Voter will be alerted to overvotes and undervotes as they navigate through the ballot.
6. **Once complete, voter prints out ballot with their selections and places in envelope.**
7. **Voter signs envelope.**
8. **Voter can return ballot by mail, drop box, or polling place/vote center by 8pm on Election Day. Voter can check the status of their ballot.**